

August 8, 2003

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Oral EX PARTE Communication on “Plug and Play” Digital Cable
Compatibility (CS Docket No. 97-80; PP Docket No. 00-67)**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On August 7, 2003, Joel Wiginton, Vice President Government Affairs and Senior Counsel, Sony Electronics Inc. and John Godfrey, Senior Manager Government Affairs (the undersigned) met with Rick Chessen and Michael Perko of the Commission’s Media Bureau. We discussed the cable-consumer electronics industry agreement and the draft regulations on plug and play digital cable compatibility which the industries recommended for adoption into the Commission’s rules.

As we discussed, Sony Electronics strongly supports the industry agreement and urges the Commission to adopt the proposed regulations as soon as possible. Enactment of the rules without delay is necessary to enable development of cable-ready products for the second half of 2004. This target is important because it coincides with the schedule on which the Commission’s digital over-air tuner requirements will begin to take effect. Because most U.S. households receive their primary television signal through cable, most consumers will want to use cable with any new digital television they purchase. Cable compatibility in tandem with the over-air digital tuners will greatly enhance consumer interest in these televisions and will be a strong catalyst for the digital transition. Conversely, if new televisions with digital tuners require a separate set top box to receive digital cable, many consumers may delay their purchases until plug and play compatibility becomes available or may purchase monitors without a digital tuner, in either case significantly slowing the digital transition.

We also discussed Sony Electronics’ belief and desire that the proposed regulations will foster a new wave of innovation and enable consumers finally to enjoy the benefits of a competitive, diverse market for cable-ready electronic products. In particular, the streamlined technical requirements of the regulations and the private DFAST License Agreement (which both industries agree is mutually beneficial, but contingent upon the enactment of the regulations) will enable companies like Sony to devote their creativity and expertise to a wide range of innovative products that provide value and enjoyment to American consumers.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed)
John Godfrey

cc: Rick Chessen
Michael Perko